GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3384
ANSWERED ON:24.03.2005
RECOMMENDATIONS OF SARKARIA COMMISSION ON PANCHAYATI RAJ
Gehlot Shri Thaawar Chand

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has accepted the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission on Panchayati Raj Institutions;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government proposes to appoint a new commission for strengthening Panchayati Raj systems;

(d) if so, by when and the objectives thereof; and

(e) the details of the action/decisions taken by the Government in the direction of providing funds directly to Gram Panchayats for rural development?

Answer

MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) & (b) Ministry of Panchayati Raj is concerned with only Recommendation No. 177 of Sarkaria Commission by which it is recommended that institutions like Zilla Parishads and elected municipal corporation need to be significantly strengthened both financially and functionally. Regular elections and sessions of these institutions is a must and means for ensuring the same in all the States uniformly should be evolved by the Union Government in consultation with National Economic and Development Council. For this purpose, a legislation,analogous to Article 172 and 174 of the Constitution,should be undertaken as suggested at para 21.2.09. Subsequent to the submission of the Sarkaria Commission Report, the 73rd and 74 Constitution Amendment Acts have been passed which confer Constitutional status on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Municipalities. Provision has been made for setting up State Finance Commissions to review the financial position of these bodies and to make recommendations to the State Governments for devolution of resources. These path breaking Constitutionalprovisions would give a new direction and thrust to decentralized planning.

(c) & (d) Government have no proposal to appoint a new Commission for strengthening the Panchayati Raj System. However, after the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on `Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj` was organised at New Delhi on 29-30 June, 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. These issues included effective devolution of functions, finances, functionaries, planning, Gram Sabhas, women, reservation for SCs/STs, special problems of SCs/STs, elections, audit, parallel bodies, capacity building and training, and state of the Panchayat Report and jurisprudence. The Conference decided to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution. Between July-December, 2004 Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj and evolved by consensus a set of around 150 points for action which have been put together in a compendium that was adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur. The Ministry has now initiated a process of visiting each of the State/UT to reyiew with the authorities concerned the progress in implementing the points for action contained in the compendium. It is expected that this will accelerate the pace of implementation of the provisions of Part IX read with Article 243ZD of the Constitution and bring about greater conformity in both letter and spirit, to the Constitutional provisions of Panchayati Raj in all States/UTs concerned.

(e) The National Common Minimum Programme provides for funds to be channeled to Panchayati Raj Institutions without diversion or delay subject to strict monitoring. Accordingly, all Ministries operating Centrally Sponsored Schemes have been asked to review their schemes in the light of Article 243G read withXI Schedule.